

VZCZCXYZ0006  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIN #2456/01 3110936  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 070936Z NOV 07  
FM AIT TAIPEI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7319  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 7421  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 8706

UNCLAS AIT TAIPEI 002456

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - NIDA EMMONS  
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)  
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: US CROSS-STRAIT POLICY

Summary: News coverage of Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies November 7 focused on the meeting in Beijing between US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and China's President Hu Jintao and the reassurance by Gates that the US's Taiwan policy remains unchanged. Another focus was the Legislative Yuan's adoption of the revised Election and Recall Law for Civil Servants, which will not bar people convicted of serious crimes from participating in elections. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an op-ed article in the pro-unification "United Daily News" said it is not too far from the truth to say the US opposes Taiwan independence. An editorial of the pro-independence "Liberty Times" urged the US to readjust its cross-strait policy. Meanwhile, an editorial in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" said that doubt remains after the Department of Defense clarified a recent news report on US cross-strait policy released by the Armed Forces Press Service. End summary.

A) "The US Opposes Taiwan Independence? A Mistake Not Too Far from the Truth"

Professor Edward I-hsin Chen of the Graduate Institute of American Studies, Tamkang University, wrote in an op-ed article in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (11/07):

"... I have asked several AIT and State Department officials about the reason why the US would not say it 'opposes Taiwan independence.' Their answers can be summarized as the following three points. First, the US position is to keep away as far as possible from the politics of the Republic of China in order not to give the impression of 'interfering in internal affairs.' Second, Taiwan is a democratic nation and has the right to decide its own destiny. Third, although Beijing opposes Taiwan independence now, it is hard to tell what will happen in the future. Washington would like to leave space for the future by not clearly stating it opposes Taiwan independence.

"... Furthermore, during the various meetings between President George W. Bush and President Hu Jintao, the Chinese side always said [afterwards] that the US side 'opposes Taiwan independence' and Washington has never formally denied this statement.

"This time the official who writes press releases for the Pentagon official Web site might not have gotten hold of the precise US official wording. Yet his mistake might not be too far from the truth, as he understands very well the minutes of the statements made by US officials at the Bush-Hu meetings."

B) "The US Should Revise Its Impractical Cross-Strait Policy"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 720,000] editorialized (11/07):

"... In fact, experts of think tanks in Washington recently have had

many discussions over whether the US government should present six new assurances to Taiwan. We believe, since Taiwan lacks international status, to remind the world of this issue by organizing activities related to the referendum on joining the UN under the name of Taiwan is positive in nature. We also believe that, in view of the common interests of the US and Taiwan, the US needs to re-examine its long-time cross-Strait policy using Taiwan's current situation as the starting point.

"... Just think. If the US really pushes a democratic Taiwan toward an autocratic China, then how would all democratic nations in the world, especially those in the process of democratization, view a US foreign policy which seeks globally to promote democratic values? Also would many Asian countries choose to take a route closer to China and farther from the US? ..."

C) "The Key [Issue] Has Not Been Clarified"

The mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 530,000] editorialized (11/07):

"... There were three main points in the US Armed Forces Press Service report released two days ago: [President] Bush is against Taiwan independence; Bush sincerely would like to see peaceful unification across the Strait; and the US equates the UN bid referendum to an independence referendum. Now that the US has clarified the first two points, it only left out the one on the referendum. However, this is the most serious part. Is there any special implication or did [they] just forget?

"... But what we must pay attention to is that the US always changes its Taiwan policy slowly and obscurely. Although one can hardly notice it in the short run, one can feel it strongly in the long run. Looking back at US-Taiwan relations over the past 50 years, one can see clearly signs of changing directions. This feeling goes

deep to the marrow.

"Therefore, when President Bush's attitude toward Taiwan transformed from a friendly one when he first took office to an agitated and alienated one later, this can be the beginning of another change of direction. In particular, the fact that the referendum part of the report was not clarified is more strange and gloomy. It is either to intimidate Taiwan into stopping the UN bid referendum or to pave the way for not implementing the Taiwan Relations Act in the future.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs needs urgently to request that the US side clarify this most significant part."

YOUNG